

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WALDHEIM/SAUNDERS CONSULTATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF MEETING WITH INR DIRECTOR SAUNDERS AND AMB YOUNG ON DECEMBER 22, UN SYG WALDHEIM REQUESTED CLOSE CONSULTATIONS ON POSSIBLE UPGRADING OF LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. WALDHEIM BELIEVES IT IS IMPORTANT TO LEAVE OPEN POSSIBILITY OF FOLLOW-ON CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK OR ELSEWHERE AS INTERIM STEP BETWEEN CAIRO CONFERENCE AND GENEVA. YEMENI PERMREP APPROACHED HIM DECEMBER 16, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH SAUDIS AND OTHERS, TO REQUEST THAT SYG REPEAT HIS OFFER TO CONVENE FOLLOW-ON MEETING. WALDHEIM SAID HE WILL TAKE NO ACTION UNTIL CAIRO CONFERENCE IS ENDED. END SUMMARY.

1. INR DIRECTOR SAUNDERS AND AMB YOUNG BRIEFED WALDHEIM AND UNDER-SECRETARIES-GENERAL URQUHART AND GUYER DECEMBER 22 ON BEGIN'S WASHINGTON VISIT, SADAT'S OBJECTIVES FOR THE ISMAILIA TALKS AND OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. WALDHEIM IN TURN REVIEWED HIS IMPRESSIONS OF HIS DECEMBER 19 CONSULTATION WITH BEGIN, EXPRESSING HIS CONFIDENCE THAT BASIS NOW EXISTS FOR EGYPT/ISRAEL NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT SINAI, BUT CONSIDERABLE CONCERN ABOUT INSUFFICIENCY OF BEGIN'S PROPOSAL REGARDING

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THE WEST BANK AND THE PALESTINIANS.

2. WALDHEIM ASKED SAUNDERS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SADAT'S INTENTION, AS IMPLIED IN PRESS REPORTS, TO UPGRADE THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. HE INDICATED THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE UN AND THE US ON THIS MATTER, ASKED WHETHER THE SECRETARY

INTENDED TO PARTICIPATE, AND UNDERScored HIS CONCERN TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE OF ALL PARTIES INCLUDING THOSE NOT ATTENDING THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. SAUNDERS SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY TO KNOW WHETHER OR WHEN PARTICIPATION WOULD BE UP-GRADED. SADAT'S ORIGINAL INVITATION, HE SAID, HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY DIRECTED TO A LOWER LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION. SADAT NOW WANTS BEGIN TO DECLARE ISRAELI READINESS IN PRINCIPLE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE 1967 TERRITORIES AND RESOLVE THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, AND IF THIS IS OBTAINED AT ISMAILIA OR AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING, HE WOULD THEN CONSIDER PROPOSING NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE AT THE FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL. AT PRESENT, THE SECRETARY PLANS TO ACCOMPANY THE PRESIDENT ON HIS EIGHT-DAY TRIP AND ATHERTON WILL REMAIN IN CAIRO. FURTHER PLANNING DEPENDS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE SADAT/BEGIN TALKS.

3. AFTER NOTING THE IMPORTANCE OF TRYING TO MOVE TOWARDS AN OVERALL AGREEMENT, WALDHEIM SAID THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS PROPOSAL TO CONVENE A MEETING OF THE PARTIES AT THE UN OR ANY OTHER VENUE WAS TO FACILITATE JORDANIAN, LEBANESE AND SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE TALKS. WALDHEIM SAID HE BELIEVES IT ESSENTIAL TO HAVE SOME KIND OF INTERMEDIATE STAGE BETWEEN CAIRO AND GENEVA. SAUNDERS AGREED, NOTING THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. WE COULD ONLY CONSIDER THIS MATTER, HOWEVER, AFTER THE ISMAILIA AND CAIRO TALKS ARE CONCLUDED,
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AND WE SEE WHERE WE ARE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

4. WALDHEIM SHOWED SAUNDERS AND YOUNG THE LETTER WHICH YEMENI PERMREP PRESENTED TO HIM DECEMBER 16 URGING HIM TO REPEAT HIS PROPOSAL. THE PERMREP HAD MADE CLEAR THAT THIS LETTER WAS INITIATED BY THE SAUDIS DURING THE YEMENI FOREIGN MINISTER'S RECENT TOUR OF THE GULF STATES. WALDHEIM TOLD HIM IT WAS TOO EARLY TO REPEAT THE PROPOSAL BUT THAT HE WOULD KEEP OPEN THE POSSIBILITY AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. WALDHEIM FURTHER SAID THAT MEGUID, BEFORE LEAVING FOR CAIRO, HAD INDICATED THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD BE NECESSARY AT THE END OF THE CAIRO MEETING TO ANNOUNCE THE CONTINUATION OF TALKS ELSEWHERE, POSSIBLE IN NEW YORK.

5. WALDHEIM SAID THAT HE WAS QUITE PLEASED THAT BEGIN AGREED TO MEET WITH HIM, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF ISRAELI SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE UN. BEGIN HAD TOLD HIM THAT HIS OBJECTION TO WALDHEIM'S PROPOSAL WAS BASED ON THE SYG'S FAILURE TO CONSULT WITH HIM IN ADVANCE RATHER THAN ON ITS MERITS. HE DID NOT REJECT THE IDEA OF A FOLLOW-ON CONFERENCE UNDER UN AUSPICES OUTRIGHT. BEGIN WAS

PREDICTABLY CRITICAL OF UN DEBATES, BUT APPRECIATIVE OF UN PEACEKEEPING ROLE IN THE AREA. WALDHEIM SAID THAT BEGIN HAD TOLD HIM, IN ANSWERING QUERY ABOUT HIS HEALTH (AS PARAPHRASED BY WALDHEIM), "I HAVE A MISSION TO FULFILL AND THIS KEEPS ME GOING" AND SUBSEQUENTLY ADDED, "SADAT HAS THE SAME FEELING OF MISSION AS I HAVE." WALDHEIM EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT BEGIN COULD BRING THE ISRAELI PUBLIC ALONG TO ACCEPT AN OVERALL AGREEMENT BUT DOUBT AS TO WHETHER BEGIN COULD BRING HIMSELF TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CONCESSIONS.

6. IN CONCLUSION, WALDHEIM EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO THE SECRETARY AND TO SAUNDERS FOR BRIEFING HIM ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ASKED THAT WE REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM. SAUNDERS INDICATED THAT WE WOULD DO SO THROUGH AMB YOUNG
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AND THE MISSION.
YOUNG

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